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Jackson Wary Of Change on A-Arms Check

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Two members of the Congressional Joint Committee on Atomic Energy expressed surprise and doubts yesterday over the United States offer in Geneva to do away with American inspectors in any future U.S.-Soviet agreement to cut back nuclear arsenals.

Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), chairman of the Atomic Energy Military Applications subcommittee, called the U.S. announcement Tuesday at the Geneva disarmament conference "a fundamental change in position that goes to the heart of the whole arms control problem."

Rep. Melvin Price (D-Ill.), chairman of the House Atomic Energy Research and Development subcommittee, said he was "uncertain" that the United States had improved its intelligence capabilities to the point where it no longer was necessary to verify the possibility of cheating by having this country's own inspectors on Soviet soil to make an "adversary" check.

No Advance Briefing

Both legislators said neither they, nor the Joint Committee as a body, had been given the customary advance briefing when they read in newspapers of the U.S. change of policy.

State Department officials said Joint Committee Chairman Chet Holifield (D-Calif.) had been informed in advance.

"The reason we dropped our old insistence on having our

own inspectors is that we feel our intelligence capabilities are now good enough so that we don't have to use them," an official of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency explained.

The Agency gained support from at least two Republican Senators, George D. Aiken (Vt.), a senior member of the Joint Committee, and Milton D. Young (S.D.), a member of the select committee that oversees the operations of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Pictures From Satellites
Young said high-resolution pictures from satellites now "can go quite a ways in telling us what is going on over there."

Aiken said, "In a day when we can determine the denomination of a postage stamp from 50 miles up, I doubt that there are many secrets left."

The inspection dispute goes back 13 years. The Soviets and the United States have discussed the possibility of cutting back on the production of material for nuclear weapons. But until now the United States had stipulated that any agreement must be insured by on-site inspectors, nationals from one country looking in on the other.

In 1964, the United States brought the International Atomic Energy Agency into the picture by proposing that each side "declare" to the IAEA the location and capacity of its nuclear production plants and

permit IAEA inspectors to come in to make sure plants declared closed down had indeed been closed down.

But the 1964 proposal also permitted the Soviets and Americans to accuse each other of violating any such cutback agreement through its own inspections. It also permitted each side to pull out of the agreement if the accusation was not satisfactorily explained.

Throughout the discussions, however, the Russians stood firm against having outsiders doing any inspecting on their soil.

Treaty Ratified

Earlier this year, the United States ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, obliges non-nuclear nations to have IAEA inspectors on their soil to make sure the nuclear material they receive from the nuclear "have" nations is used for peaceful purposes.

The nuclear "have-nots" complained at the Geneva disarmament conference that they were being asked to permit IAEA inspectors, while the Russians and Americans were under no such obligation.

The new Nixon Administration thereupon put the Soviets on the spot as the holdout.

Adrian S. Fisher, acting U.S. representative at Geneva, declared: "The suitability of IAEA safeguards should be apparent to all of us who have called on other states to accept them."

"The Soviet representative, Aleksei A. Roshchin, later told reporters the new U.S. proposal would be carefully studied.

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